

REMARKS

In the February 27, 2004 Office Action, the Examiner noted that claims 28-60 were pending in the application; rejected claims 28-30, 37, 39-45 and 58-60 under 35 USC § 102(a); and rejected claims 31-36, 38 and 46-57 under 35 USC § 103(a). In rejecting the claims, German Patent 19548387C1 to Pfaff and U.S. Patent 5,651,006 to Fujino et al. (respectively References N and A in the February 27, 2004 Office Action) were cited. Claims 28-60 remain in the case. The Examiner's rejections are traversed below.

As an initial matter, Applicants thank the Examiner for the courtesy of an interview extended to Applicants' representative on July 13, 2004. During the interview, the features of the pending claims were discussed in light of the applied references. No agreement was reached pending the filing of a response to the outstanding Office Action.

The Application

The application is directed to securely transmitting digital messages between applications, such as agent and manager applications, via proxy agents connected by a network, where the agent and manager may be used to implement simple network management protocol version 1 (SNMPv1). As described at e.g., page 8, paragraph 30 to page 10, paragraph 46, to send a message from the agent to the manager, the agent application encodes digital messages for the manager using a network protocol. Then a first proxy agent encrypts the message and encodes the encrypted message using the same network protocol used by the agent application, prior to transmitting the encoded encrypted message over a network. Upon receipt of the encoded encrypted message, a second proxy agent on the manager side decodes the encoded encrypted message and decrypts the decoded encrypted message and then the management application decodes the decrypted message using the same protocol as the proxy agent.

Cited Prior Art**German Patent 19548387C1 to Pfaff**

The Pfaff patent is directed to integration of security mechanisms into a client-server system. As illustrated in Fig. 13 and described on pages 11 and 12, messages (that have been encoded and then decoded according to a transport protocol) are encrypted in a security layer SL prior to encoding by transport layer TP for transmission to a server XS.

U.S. Patent 5,651,006 to Fujino et al.

The Fujino et al. patent is directed to a hierarchical organization of SNMP managers and agents.

Prior Art Rejections

Claims 28-30, 37, 39-45 and 58-60 were rejected under 35 USC § 102(a) as unpatentable over German patent number 19548387 C1 to Pfaff; and claims 31-36, 38 and 46-57 were rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) as unpatentable over Pfaff and Fujino et al. It will be assumed that the citations to Pfaff are to the English translation, since pages, not columns were cited. However, the English translation provided to the undersigned did not include a translation of the drawings.

As amended, independent claims 28, 29, 30, 39-41 and 58-60 recite the operations of encoding a digital message, encrypting the encoded message and encoding the encrypted message using the same protocol, as described above. Proxy agents between the network and manager and agent applications are used to perform the encrypting and decrypting, as well as encoding and decoding using the same protocol as the manager and agent applications, so that the encrypted messages can be transmitted properly by the network. This provides a benefit in that the manager and agent applications can run without any code modifications. Further, security management based on SNMP v1 can be used for data transfer between manager and agent.

Nothing has been cited or found in the English translation of Pfaff suggesting the claimed operations. The cited paragraphs on pages 11 and 12 used to reject claim 28 only describe encoding a communication according to a transport protocol, so that the communication is "embedded" into the transport protocol" (page 11, next to last line) and then decoding the communication (page 12, lines 6-7) and routing the decoded message to a security layer to undergo "cryptographic procedures" (page 12, line 11). After the portion of the English translation of Pfaff cited to reject claim 28, the encrypted message is described as being encoded for transmission to the server XS.

Although Pfaff describes encoding operations before and after the cryptographic procedures, there is also a decoding operation that occurs prior to the cryptographic procedures that cancels out the first encoding operation. As a result, there is no "subjecting the encoded message to at least one cryptographic process to form a cryptographically processed message" (e.g., claim 28, lines 5-6). Similarly, there is no "decoding the inversely cryptographically processed message by an application according to the encoding format of the network protocol

used in said decoding of the cryptographically processed message" (e.g., claim 29, last three lines), because the message that undergoes cryptographic procedures in Pfaff is not encoded.

Limitations similar to at least one of the phrases quoted in the preceding paragraph are recited in the other independent claims. It is submitted that nothing has been cited or found suggesting that the cryptographic procedures in Pfaff should be applied to an encoded message. Therefore, it is submitted that claims 28-30, 37, 39-45 and 58-60 patentably distinguish over Pfaff.

Furthermore, nothing has been cited or found in Fujino et al. suggesting any modification of Pfaff to perform the operations recited in the claims. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted Pfaff and Fujino et al. do not teach or suggest the features of the present claimed invention. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that claims 28-60 patentably distinguish over Pfaff in view of Fujino et al.

SUMMARY

For the reasons set forth above, it is submitted that the cited prior art does not teach or suggest the features of the present claimed invention. Thus, it is submitted that claims 28-60 are in a condition suitable for allowance. Reconsideration of the claims and an early Notice of Allowance are earnestly solicited.

If there are any additional fees associated with filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

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